

Individuation Process from Patna to Patusan – An Archetypal Analysis of Lord Jim

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[**Abstract**] This paper is devoted to the discussion of Joseph Conrad 's novel, Lord Jim, based on Jungian psychological theory of the collective conscious and archetype and views the hero 's Jim 's journey from sea to forest as a metaphor of inner quest. The archetypal approach to this novel will help illuminate the "Jim – myth " as a microcosmic window to the macrocosmic view of modern man 's isolation and introspection in search of individual identity.

[**Key words**] Archetypal criticism Self- deception Self- discovery Archetypes Dream Persona Shadow

1. Introduction

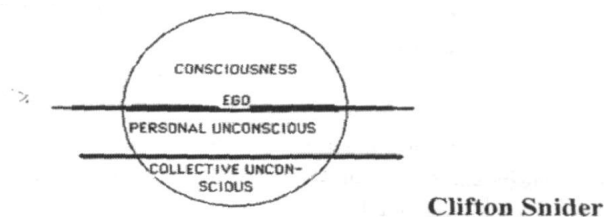
...It is from weakness unknown, but perhaps suspected, as in some parts of the world you suspect a deadly snake in every bush– from weakness that may lie hidden, watched or unwatched, prayed against or manfully scorned, repressed or maybe ignored more than half a lifetime, not one of us is safe. (Conrad 1981: 27)

The conception of parts of our individual self as foreign territory that contains hidden dangers the knowledge of which disappears from our consciousness or we may simply repress for half a lifetime is one pivot that sets Jim, the hero in Conrad 's Lord Jim, in motion to quest wholeness of self. This echoes Jung 's later psychological theories of the "individuation " process, which is essentially the process of integrating the unconscious contents of the psyche to our conscious and a greater sense of psychic balance results (Guerin et al. 2004: 180). Central to the way individuation progresses is to encounter and embrace the unknown sides of the personality, which in the literary work are often concretized by typical images, symbols or patterns. They are archetypes that Tarnas notes as "the fundamental determining structures of human experience "and in a sense constitute a crucial avenue to the psychic events of the fictional characters (1991: 424). Granted that Jim 's journey from sea to forest is a metaphor of inner quest, the archetypal approach to the novel will help illuminate the "Jim – myth " as a microcosmic window to the macrocosmic view of modern man 's isolation and introspection in search of individual identity (Conrad 1981: 181).

2. Archetypal Criticism

Prior to the analysis of Jim 's approximation to self – integration from the archetypal frame of reference, there arises a need for the an examination of archetypal criticism, one branch of psychological criticism Jungian psychological theory of the collective conscious and archetype can be regarded as his primary contribution to archetypal criticism. Jung, father of analytical psychology, expands Freud 's notion of personal unconscious and develops the concept of the collective conscious that is psychic inheritance transcending the individual (Guerin et al. 2004). While the personal unconscious comprises of that

which has been experienced but repressed or ignored (Barry 2002), the collective unconscious contains that which is not personally experienced but becomes manifest in the form of psychic impulses just as spontaneous as the instincts of body (Cheng 1998). It is inherited from the ancestor and predisposes human beings to respond similarly to identical stimuli (ibid). Indispensably correlated to the idea of collective conscious are archetypes. These "primordial images "for Jung are the building blocks of the psyche, coming from the depth of the unconscious (qtd. in Guerin et al. 2004: 178). Archetypes projected in the literary work as the contents of the unconscious, therefore, are essential to the understanding of the symbolic journey of psychological discovery and authentic self – recognition on the part of the hero or heroine. As observed in the Clifton Snider 's diagram of Jungian psychology, the total self in terms of psychic wholeness which is the goal of individuation is illustrated in a full circle as a sign of wholeness, integration and unity. It is apparent that psychic integrity will be identification with not only ego – consciousness but the both personal and collective unconscious.



3. Self – deception

Whitmont explains that the first necessary stage, though not adequate by itself, of awareness of unconscious materials is through projection, which is one 's personal filling out of an archetype but superimposed onto the personality of another (1969). "Aspects of ourselves (usually negative ones) are not recognized as part of ourselves but are perceived in or attributed to another" (Barry 2002: 98). In Lord Jim, the skipper of Patna who intends on self – preservation at all costs fixes in Jim 's memory as "the incarnation of everything vile and base " (Conrad 1981: 13), and Cornelius "seemed to be the hateful embodiment of all the annoyances and difficulties "that Jim has found in his way to work out salvation from the disgrace of

abandoning the refugee passengers and leaving them to their fate (ibid 189). These figures are a metaphor of shadowy side of human nature and their repulsive and ineradicable presence is externalization of part of Jim's interior psyche that he refuses to recognize in himself but easily see in others. Though Jim insists on non-similarities he shares with the man governed by base motives and thinks himself "cut off from them by a space that cannot be traversed" (ibid 66), his ascription to instinctive reflex of his jump from the sinking Patna into the lifeboat becomes virtually more of a telling evidence of his being gripped by fear of death than a feasible excuse to free him from his feeling of being mentally crippled. The motive behind his compelling impulse to leap is without doubt an innate resistance to death and an ingrained desire to escape and surpass death when he is brought in confront with the imminent danger under which there are the alternatives of life and death with nothing in-between. The jump is an archetypal response of self-preservation, rooted in the deposit of experience of a collective human being's impotence in face of cruel and awful catastrophes, and thus is unconscious, only activated by similar dangerous stimuli (Cheng 1998). The distinction that Jim presumes to exist between him and those he loathes is blurred. Down in the lifeboat among those most contemptible of men, the contemptible layer of those men's personality is part of Jim. The projection of a psychic content as it belongs to some other person is also apparent when he imagines the terror that might be struck into the sleeping passengers if alert. The fright that the passengers may be taken by in actuality mirrors the fear of death that has been engraved in Jim's psychic constitution and is triggered when Patna collides with the submerged wreck. Projection is an initial stage of actualization of the forces dormant in unconscious. However, by adhering those hidden forces to some other person or object, it is a sign that such forces have not been fully integrated into our psychic.

It merits our attention that another primary way that the unconscious elements or archetypes present themselves is through dream as symbolic images rather than rational thoughts (Jung 1968). Dream or illusion, as suggested by Cheng (1998), is one of the manifestations of the universal human psychological need to surpass feeling of infinitesimal and inadequacy in the soulless and indifferent vast universe and overcome the sustained and repressed traumatic experiences in relation to other individuals and the community. Since the sense of limitation and wound is embedded in the reservoir of our experiences as a species and universal to generations of humankind, illusionary vision can be interpreted as the symbolic expression of "a collective human being[']s" longing for a spiritual land (Guerin et al 2004: 177). This is evident in Jim's daydream:

He saw himself saving people from sinking ships, cutting away masts in a hurricane, swimming through a surf with a line; or as a lonely castaway, barefooted and half naked, walking on uncovered reefs in search of shellfish to stave off starvation. He confronted savages on tropical shores, quelled mutinies on the high seas, and in a small boat upon the ocean

kept up the hearts of despairing men.... (Conrad 1981: 3)

The image appears in the illusion is an archetypal hero, undergoing ordeals and unflinching at danger, which is the reflection of Jim's unconscious desire to conquer his intense awareness of the hostile universe where the "elemental furies are coming at him with a purpose of malice, with a strength beyond control, ... which means to sweep the whole precious world utterly away from his sight by the simple and appalling act of taking his life" (Conrad 1981: 6). Feeling "tormented as if at the bottom of an abyss of unrest" (ibid) and "hopeless difficulty" (ibid 20), Jim's fantasy to assign heroic deeds to himself is a sublimation of his inner fear of the overwhelming odds in the malicious nature. The accessibility of archetypes to consciousness through dream is an indication of the self-regulating psyche seeking for a balance and the individuation is underway. If a life journey is parallel to an expedition through unknown terra both within and without, the personality maturity that brings with it approximation to self-integration is inevitable one of the goals. The pronouncement on "how to be" by a Jungian figure of a wise old man in Lord Jim, Stein, sheds considerable light on the spiritual voyage to self-discovery and pinpoints the individuation process aided by the archetypes.

A man that is born falls into a dream like a man who falls into the sea. If he tries to climb out into the air as inexperienced people endeavour to do, he drowns—nicht wahr? ... No! I tell you! The way is to the destructive element submit yourself, and with the exertions of your hands and feet in the water make the deep, deep sea keep you up. (Conrad 1981: 138)

4. Self-discovery

Dream, the means by which archetypes are encountered, is analogous to the sea in that both encompass the potential life destructive and sustaining forces and the survival of self hinges on striking a balance of the two forces. Following the dream and submitting to the destructive element will uphold one submerged in the water and balance out a character with growth to greater awareness and maturity. Patusan that Stein sends Jim to is the embodiment of dream where his self-knowledge spirals upward with the increased contact with or consciousness of different archetypes, both potentially negative and positive. This remote and primitive area in the Malay Archipelago remains unknown and uncivilized as the latent collective unconscious is left untouched. Jim's initiation into the depth of the forest is a metaphor of a descent into the mythic underground to meet with the hidden structural components of the psyche. Remoteness and isolation of such a space as Patusan, described as a "yawning grave" (Conrad 1981: 142), is representative of the optimal condition for introspection and an archetypal location waiting for the rebirth of identity integration. Nichols maintains that a separate place that encourages and enforces solitude can facilitate the unveiling of "the potentials and shortcomings" which have been formerly projected onto others and lead to what "one's unique self" is (1980: 170). The whole

array of potentials built in each individual's psyche corresponds to the concept of the collective unconscious. Central archetypal expressions of them pertaining to Jim's introspective experience or individuation process in Patusan are the persona and shadow.

Persona is the public mask that provides a protective covering for the inner self, revealing only the aspects of the individual that conforms to social or professional norm. An individual, as a socializing being, more or less has imprinted in their psychological reality a concern for social personality. According to Jungian psychology, over-identification with the public mask will make one deviant from our true self and result in "such symptoms of neurotic disturbance as irritability and melancholy" (Guerin et al. 2004: 182) and bring about "unconscious reactions, moods, passions, fears, hallucinations, weaknesses and vices" (Goldbrunner 1964: 121). In the novel, Briely, the unimpeachable seaman in a professional sense, is irritated by the Jim's presence at the court enquiry and later astoundingly commits suicide. His devotion to maritime craft is a superficial endeavor to preserve "just the name for that kind of decency" instead of out of inner genuine care for humanity in general. In the Jim's case of abandoning the pilgrim ship, he asserts that he doesn't "care a snap for all the pilgrims that ever came out of Asia" (Conrad 1981: 43). Briely has fallible humanity within him and his suicidal act is a submission to fears, weaknesses or vices that he has hidden from his social personality and identified in the Jim's "jump". His self-destruction is a sign of failure of self-acceptance. Conrad's depiction of Briely bears an insinuation of the persona Jim is obsessed with an impeccable image is what he attributes to himself and what he wants others to know he is. "...his manner displayed a kind of dogged self-assertion.... It seemed a necessity, and it was directed apparently as much at himself as at anybody else. He was spotless neat, appareled in immaculate white from shoes to hat, ..." (Conrad 1981: 1). In Patusan, an enclosed area indicative of introspection, Jim unexceptionally encounters this archetype, a challenge on his way to individuation. It is personified in the sovereign role that Jim acts out and the honorable title "Tuan" is amplification of "inflation", the presence of an inflated ego (Blisker 40). Jim is filled with "personal pride" (ibid 142), seeming "to love the land and the people with a sort of fierce egoism, with a contemptuous tenderness" (ibid 161). "All his conquests, the trust, the fame, the friendships, the love" makes him over identify with the persona but "all these things that made him master had made him a captive, too". (Conrad 160). Despite the control he exerts over the inhabitants, the introspective forest experience effects a transformation in Jim. It is in Patusan that the undercurrents of the unconscious press to the conscious and Jim recognizes his own shadow material hidden behind the public mask. Since individuation involves one's cognizance of the realm of the unconscious and lead to the core of the personality or increased knowledge of the psychic reality

including both personal strength and limitations, "one of the first necessities on the road to personality is to part from the persona" and embrace the shadow (Golbrunner 119- 21).

The shadow refers to "the darker side of our unconscious self, the inferior and less pleasing aspects of the personality, which we wish to suppress" (Guerin et al. 2004: 181). The negative side of one's psyche is often in the habit of morally unacceptable impulses, the recognition of which will enable an individual to detach from the persona and withdraw projection of those unfavorable traits onto others. It is one psychological and spiritual transformation that leads to wholeness of the self. Such foul presence of Brown in Patusan is the externalization of the soft spot that Jim internalizes. Brown alludes to the common ground he finds with Jim and it constitutes Jim's access to that buried in the dark sphere of his personality.

When he asked Jim, with a sort of brusque despairing frankness, whether he himself—straight now—didn't understand that when "it came to saving one's life in the dark, one didn't care who else went—three, thirty, three hundred people"—it was as if a demon had been whispering advice in his ear. ... He asked Jim whether he had nothing fishy in his life to remember that he was so damnedly hard upon a man trying to get out of a deadly hole by the first means that came to hand—and so on, and so on. And there ran through the rough talk a vein of subtle reference to their common blood, an assumption of common experience; a sickening suggestion of common guilt, of secret knowledge that was like a bond of their minds and of their hearts. (Conrad 1981: 251- 52)

With face-to-face contact with the epitome of the archetypal shadow, the traumatic past that has been repressed or ignored springs from the unconscious territory and comes to the surface. The evil seen in Brown manifests to Jim as appearance on the scene his own alter ego. In answer to Jewel question whether Brown is a very bad man, Jim answers, "Men act badly sometimes without being much worse than others" (ibid 256). Jim is made aware that "there was some infernal alloy in his metal" (ibid 29) and he is not as immaculate as he appears to be. The spotless white apparel Jim wears bears resemblance to a cocoon that is spun to completely envelop the larva. It is pricked unexpectedly and the interior reality is naked to Jim's mind's eyes. If the larva till that moment is immature enough, inside will remain a dead larva during pupal stage; while if it coincides with the point of maturity, out will fly a butterfly. A butterfly is the end of metamorphosis and a symbol of maturity. It is, if closely observed, an insect with the veils of the wings and its maturity grace comes from the harmony sensed in the double-sided image. Stein praises it as the "masterpiece of Nature" from "the balance of colossal forces" (ibid 133). It is a wonder that "perfect equilibrium produces" (ibid 133). When Jim's inflated egoistic bubble is pricked, will he turn out to be a natural self like a butterfly with integrated identity that reaches a marvelous equilibrium between the two incompatible halves, the shadowy side of the insect nature and

the scrupulous glaring persona like the wings with an exquisite pattern? Release of Brown is a conscious gesture on the part of Jim to make allowance for the existence in him of the weakness initially unknown or suppressed. Jim embraces the dark powers pressing from the unconscious realm, increasing the awareness of his greater psyche.

However, through the rip of the cocoon is seen a butterfly beautiful yet soon dead in solitary grandeur. Jim finally takes upon his head the responsibility for the death of Dain Waris as a result of the revenge that Brown wreaks on the Patusan inhabitants and is shot dead by Doriman. Goldbrunner explicates the importance of endeavoring “to achieve a harmony of the inner and outer life and to be to the outside world what one is within ”in the individuation process (1964: 121). Jim achieves the former but fails in the latter. He fulfills personal psychic reconstitution by penetrating the public mask that isolates the inner self and the environment and taking on of his projection on others, but the revelation to his consciousness of the comprehensive picture of his own psychic reality does not carry him back to the world as the one he unique is. His audience reject any alternative once he has maintains the image of himself as heroic rescuer. Even Jewel refuses to accept that Jim is “not good enough ”(Conrad 1981: 206). The persona that Jim sets out to detach himself from becomes the rigid reality that the public takes for him. Jim is “imprisoned within the very freedom of power ”, guarded inflexibly by Jewel along with her accomplices – forest and people– in the seclusion of the land (ibid 183). The unknowability of Jim ’s natural self by others sets him in absolute solitude. That is the predicament of Jim, out of which he submits to the archetypal role of a martyr, who “learns to give, to commit, and to sacrifice for others ” (Pearson 1996: 4). Jim ’s inner journey becomes stuck at the martyr archetype.

5. Conclusion

Generally speaking, Jim ’s journey is inward and archetypal, reflecting Jung ’s individuation process– departure from the civilized world, descent into the depth of the virgin

forest to undergo a transformation and discovery of integrated identity. It is a process after which Jim has become a more knowing man with a light kindled in the dark recesses of the Self but fails to achieve renewed accommodation with the outside world.

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